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CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554

*Mayor*

James M. Thor

*Mayor Pro Tempore*

L. Anthony Beall

*Council Members*

Neil C. Blais

Gary Thompson

Jerry Holloway

*City Manager*

Steven E. Hayman

In the Matter of \_\_\_\_\_ )  
Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of \_\_\_\_\_ )  
the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984 \_\_\_\_\_ ) MB  
Docket No. 05-311  
as amended by the Cable Television Consumer \_\_\_\_\_ )  
Protection and Competition Act of 1992 \_\_\_\_\_ )

**COMMENTS OF THE CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA**

These Comments are filed by the City of Rancho Santa Margarita in support of the comments filed by the National League of Cities and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors ("NATOA"). Like NLC and NATOA, the City of Rancho Santa Margarita believes that local governments can issue an appropriate local franchise for new entrants into the video services field on a timely basis, just as they have for established cable services providers. In support of this belief, we wish to inform the Commission about the facts of video franchising in our community.

**Cable Franchising in Our Community**

**Community Information**

Rancho Santa Margarita is a city with a population of 47,214. Our franchised cable provider is Cox Communications. Our community has negotiated cable franchises since 3/9/05.

**Competitive Cable Systems**

Our community, the City of Rancho Santa Margarita has recently been approached by AT&T to provide service. We have had one initial meeting. The applicant has indicated that they will not enter into a "franchise agreement". However, they are open to entering into a similar agreement. The applicant indicated that it is not proposing to build out the entire area. They indicated a willingness to address some PEG access issues.

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## Conclusions

The local cable franchising process functions well in Rancho Santa Margarita. As the above information indicates, we are experienced at working with cable providers to both see that the needs of the local community are met and to ensure that the practical business needs of cable providers are taken into account.

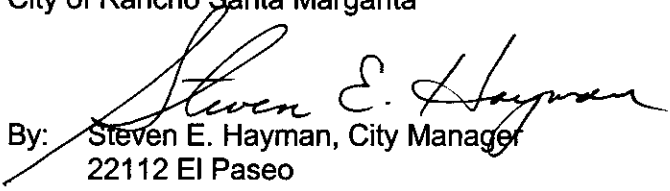
Local cable franchising ensures that local cable operators are allowed access to the rights of way in a fair and evenhanded manner, that other users of the rights of way are not unduly inconvenienced, and that uses of the rights of way, including maintenance and upgrade of facilities, are undertaken in a manner which is in accordance with local requirements. Local cable franchising also ensures that our local community's specific needs are met and that local customers are protected.

Local franchises thus provide a means for local government to appropriately oversee the operations of cable service providers in the public interest, and to ensure compliance with applicable laws. There is no need to create a new Federal bureaucracy in Washington to handle matters of specifically local interest.

Finally, local franchises allow each community, including ours, to have a voice in how local cable systems will be implemented and what features (such as PEG access, institutional networks or local emergency alerts, etc.) will be available to meet local needs. These factors are equally present for new entrants as for existing users.

Rancho Santa Margarita therefore respectfully requests that the Commission do nothing to interfere with local government authority over franchising or to otherwise impair the operation of the local franchising process as set forth under existing Federal law with regard to either existing cable service providers or new entrants.

Respectfully submitted,  
City of Rancho Santa Margarita

By:   
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